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SUBJECT: DRUNKEN PASSENGER DISRUPTS TURKISH AIR FLIGHT, BUT
NO HIJACKING

¶1. (U) Turkish and international media reported October 15 that a Turkish Airlines flight from Antalya, Turkey to St Petersburg, Russia had been hijacked during flight. Subsequent press reports said the hijacker had been subdued and that the flight was continuing on to St Petersburg. Still later reports said the passenger had sent a note to the pilot saying he had a bomb and threatening to blow up the plane. The plane landed at 3:20 PM in St Petersburg and the passenger was arrested.

¶2. (SBU) Kerem Alp of the MFA's Civil Aviation Office said "I would hesitate to call it a hijacking. Its like a joke." Alp said the plane sent out a "Signal of Potential Distress," not a hijacking signal. In communication with the plane, it appeared that a Russian passenger was becoming a security problem due to excessive alcohol consumption. the plane later relayed that the situation was under control and it was proceeding on course to St Petersburg. Alp said it was unclear if the drunken passenger was subdued by other passengers or "just fell asleep." MFA was not treating the event as a hijacking. He did not know if there were any Amcits on the flight.

¶3. (U) Ali Ariduru, the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) also said that the incident "was not a hijacking." DGCA Chief Aviation Security Expert Serdar Karabulut said the press reports were a "false alarm" and that the incident could not be treated as a hijacking. He added that Russian authorities would investigate the passenger who caused the incident.

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